



Idleness

and

Industry.

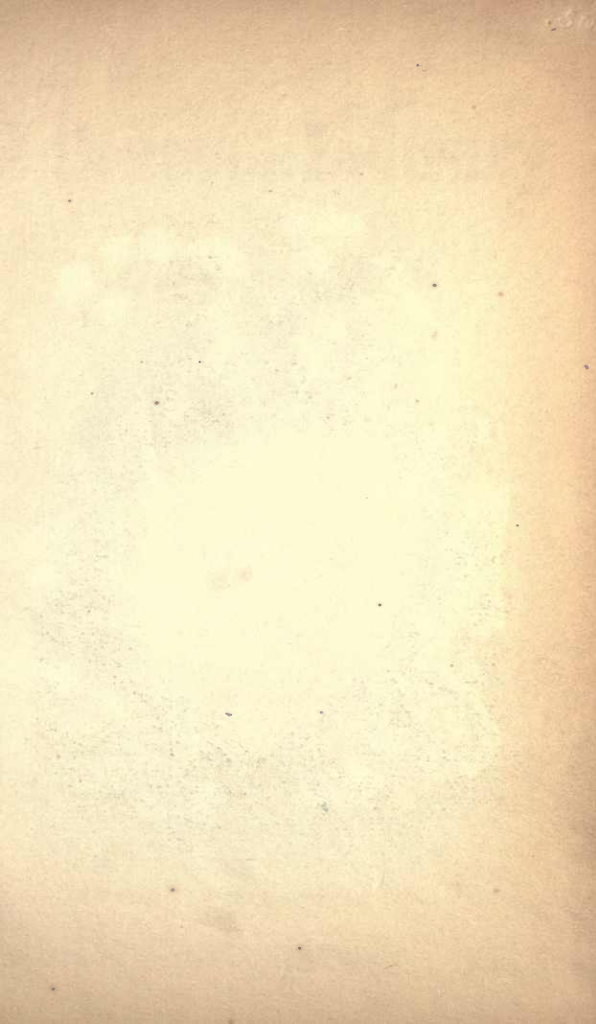
By F. Fechner at Guben.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
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F. Tuckerschlag 1874.

Idleness and Industry

an instructive example

for

young children

translated from the German

of

VICTOR ADAM.

With 14 illustrating pictures.

Printed by F. Fechner, Guben.

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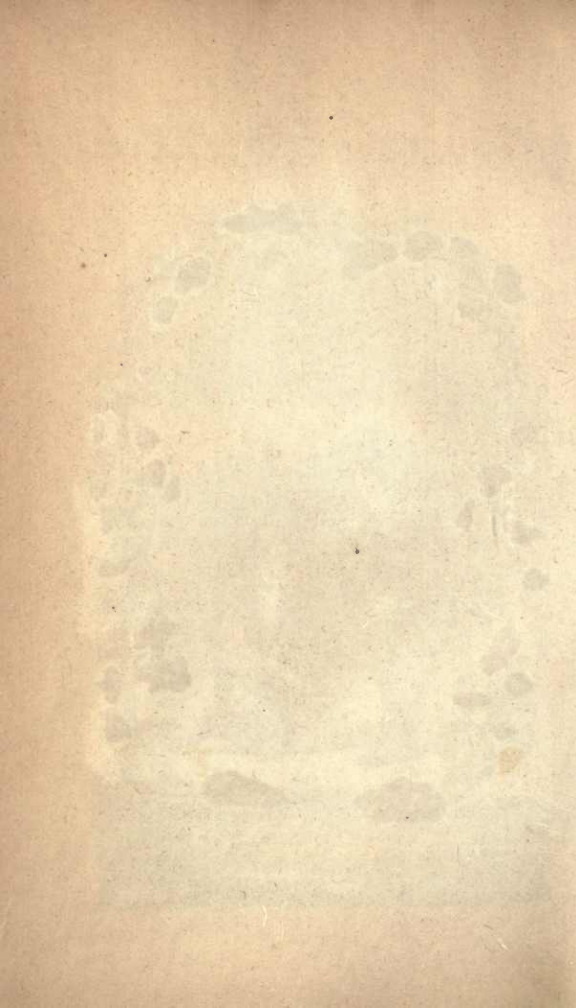
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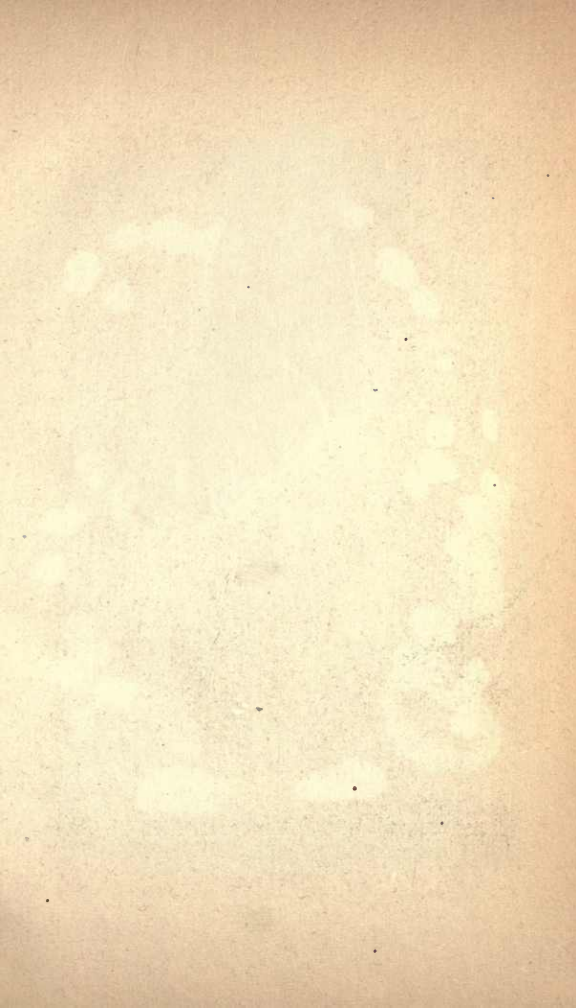
VICTOR ADAM.

With 14 illustrating pictures.

Printed by R. F. Schuch, Dublin.









Mr. Stein, an old merchant, had after the death of his wife, retired with his only son, Felix, to a prettily situated country-seat near Rouen. His son was then about eight years old and of delicate health, so that his father, for fear of losing him, would not allow him, to be much troubled with studying. The morning was often already far advanced, while Felix was stretching himself in his bed. The natural consequence of this idleness was entire want of appetite and in order to excite and he stuffed himself with all sorts of sweets and delicacies, which made him neither stronger nor more cheerful although the greatest care was taken to please and gratify him.

II.

Felix was yet sleeping, while Robert the son of Mr. Stein's gardener, was already assisting his father in his work. Although young, he tried to make himself everywhere useful and by continued exertion, he was able to perform work, which appeared to be above his strength. He had the entire care of cleaning the walks in the garden, and with the first glimpse of daylight, was to be seen, armed with his rake, or engaged in weeding the flowers. When his work was done he attended his father, who instructed him in gardening; in fact: Robert was never idle. It was indeed a pleasure to see his rosy cheeks and cheerful look, for nothing preserves body and mind so well as labour and activity.





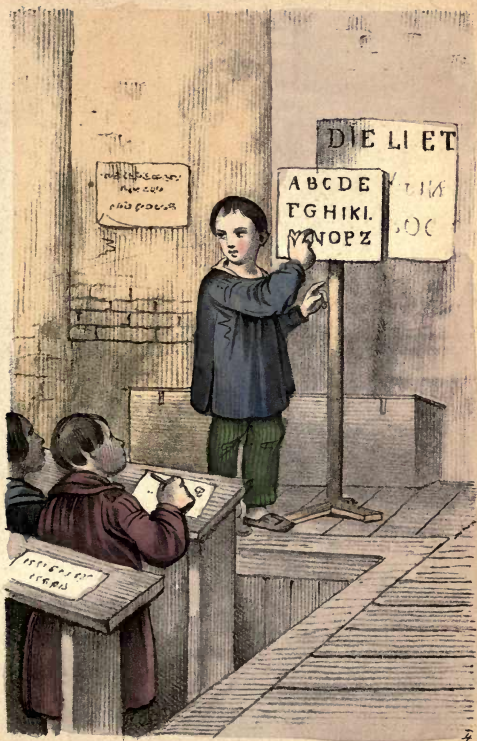


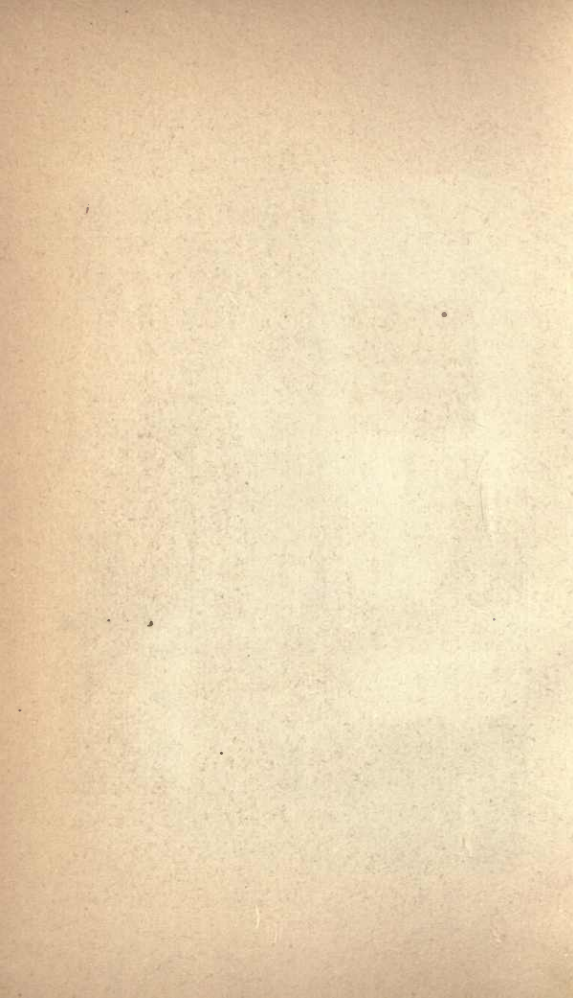
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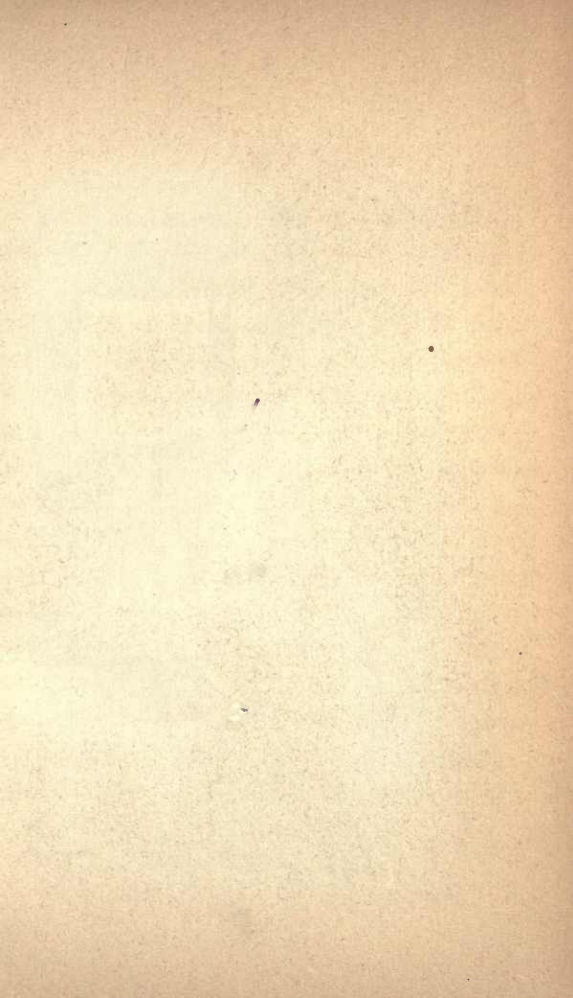
Although his love for Felix was very great, still Mr. Stein would not keep him constantly at home; for the boy was approaching his tenth year, and could but indifferently write and read. His father had engaged for him private-teachers, but the indolence and indocility of their pupil soon induced them to discontinue their instruction. The sad father had no other alternative, but to send his son to a boarding-school. Every other boy, but Felix felt very happy; they were in company of cheerful comrades, who were competing with one another in their studies; but as for Felix, no day passed, without his being punished for his idleness.

IV.

Like most poor country-people, Robert's father was assisted during the summer by his eldest son; but as soon as the winter approached and he had not much to do in the garden, Robert was careful regularly to attend the village-school, and tried very hard when there to make up by industry and attention what he had lost in the summer, so that many of his school-fellows, who attended the school during the whole year were behind him. Encouraged by this success and by the well-deserved praises of his teacher, who held him up as an example to others, Robert redoubled his zeal and always remained the first boy in school.









V.

An old proverb says: "tell me your associates, and I will tell you what you are." This means that both children and grown up people like those best who resemble them most. According to this principle Felix could not easily find a friend among his school-fellows; there was however one amongst them, who was distinguished for his greediness, and this boy became the intimate companion of Felix for the following reason: When Felix came to school, he was always provided with a large stock of cakes and sweetmeats, which he shared with his friend under the condition, that the latter was to do his school-exercises. Do you not think, that this was very dishonest? and would you ever imitate a boy, who thus cheated his schoolmaster, wronging at the same time his schoolfellows who did their work themselves?

VI.

We have just seen that poor Robert was as eager to learn something as Felix was neglectful and indifferent in his studies. The efforts of this poor boy deserved distinction, and received it in a very honourable manner. The vicar of the village, attracted by the abilities of the boy, found pleasure in instructing him privately, and accomplishing his education. He gave him every evening lessons in those branches, which are not taught in village-schools and in this manner Robert acquired some knowledge of Drawing, Geometry and even of Music. By this intercourse with well educated persons he also became more polished in his manners.





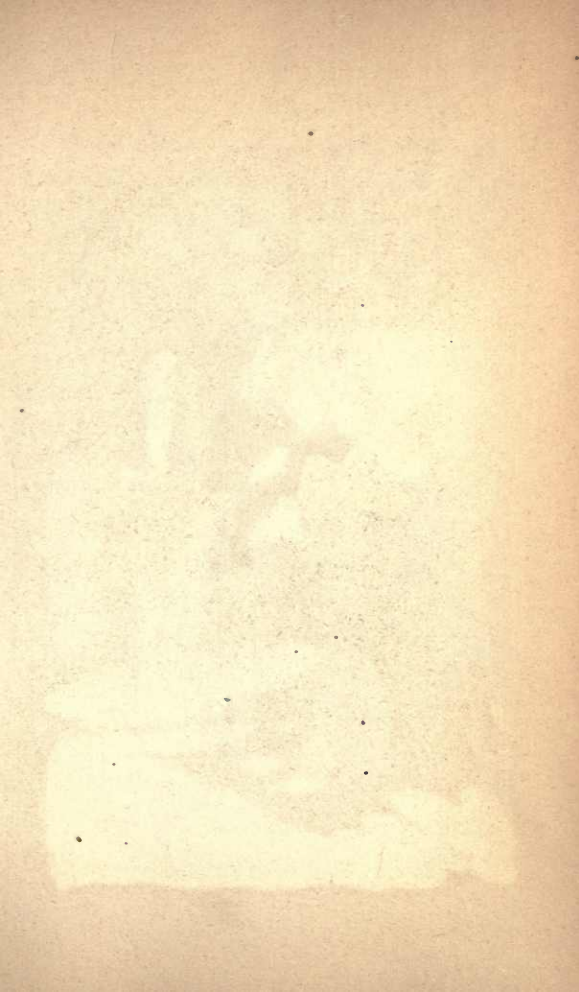
VII.

The time, during which Felix frequented the school, had passed for him very slowly. Discontent is usually the companion of idleness. As the prisoner longs for the hour, when the door of his prison is to be opened, so our idler was sighing for the term, which was to release him from school. He had passed the most beautiful time of his life, upon which our whole future depends, uselessly. At last the wished day arrived when Felix had finished his education, that is to say, he had passed from five to six years in school, and he left without the least reluctance the residence, where he had spent his childhood, leaving no regrets and taking with him no remembrance of his masters or schoolfellows. What a sad separation!

VIII.

The kind vicar, who had taken so much trouble with Robert's education was much pleased with the progress he made. He interested himself for him with Mr. Stein, by whose influence the young peasant was admitted in the agricultural school, where Robert perfected himself in what he had already studied and acquired much new and useful information. By labor he had become hardy and his frequent intercourse with the vicar had developed his understanding; therefor when he had finished his studies, and left the establishment, he took with him the esteem of his teachers and the friendship of his colleagues, who were all convinced, that Robert would some day do honor to society.







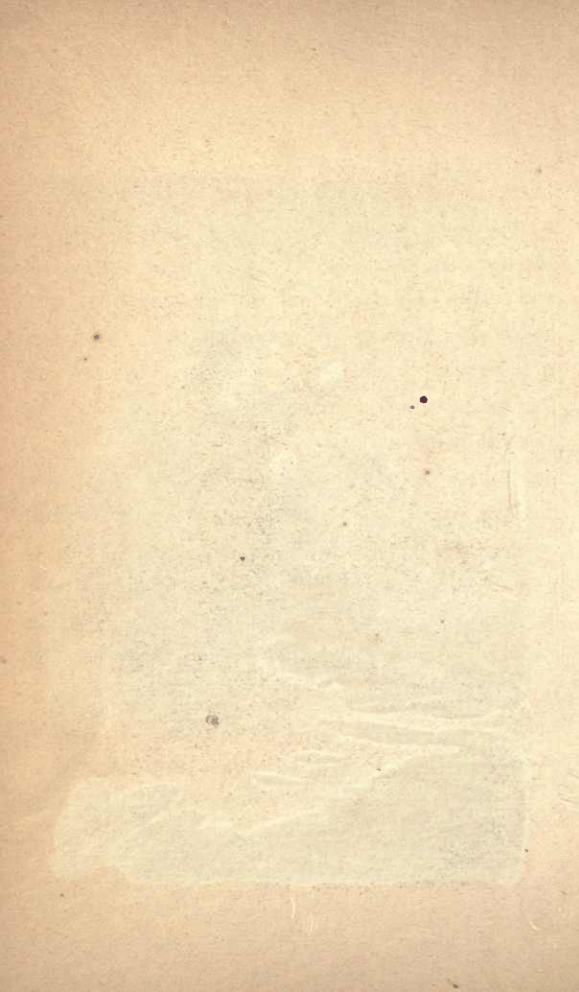
IX.

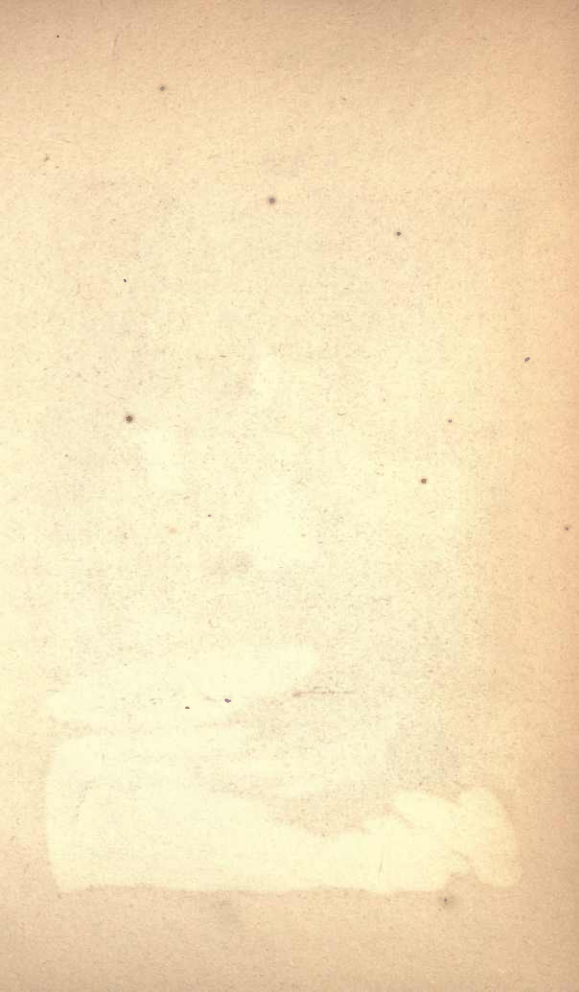
Felix's heart was not quite depraved; he was not insensible to the happiness of being again with his father. But Mr. Stein soon discovered the weak side of his son and could not help expressing to him his disapprobation and grief. Felix was moreover, like all idlers, not a little conceited about his talents, and ascribed the reproaches, which his father made him, to the unreasonable expectations of the latter. This dissatisfaction with his father, together with the ennui, by which he was constantly tormented, caused him to see with pleasure the moment approach, when he was to leave for Paris, to study the law. But, oh fatal effect of habit! Felix, the youth, was not better than Felix the boy had been; but continued unfit for study. To make his misfortune complete, he fell in with bad company, by whom he was attracted into the gambling-house. Oh, how is this unfortunate young man to be pitied!

X.

In the whole neighbourhood, where Robert's parents lived, every body talked of the great distinction with which he had left the agricultural college and he was received with joy, and pride, not only by his parents, but also, by the vicar, who had continued to give him his good advice. A few miles from the village, in which Robert lived, resided a small farmer, who had received but an inferior education, and had lately by the death of a distant relation come in possession of considerable property. This man was very glad to find in Robert a skilful and honest young man, who could by his knowledge assist him in managing his extensive estates. Robert accepted the offer and found his situation very comfortable; and what was most honourable to him, he owed it solely to his own merits.







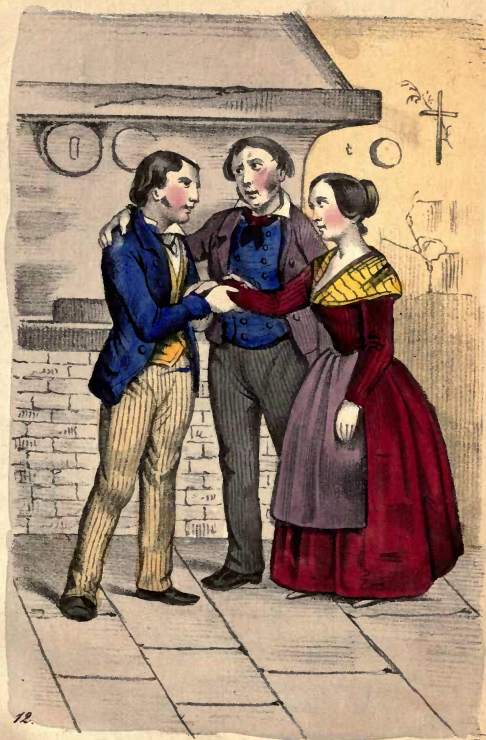


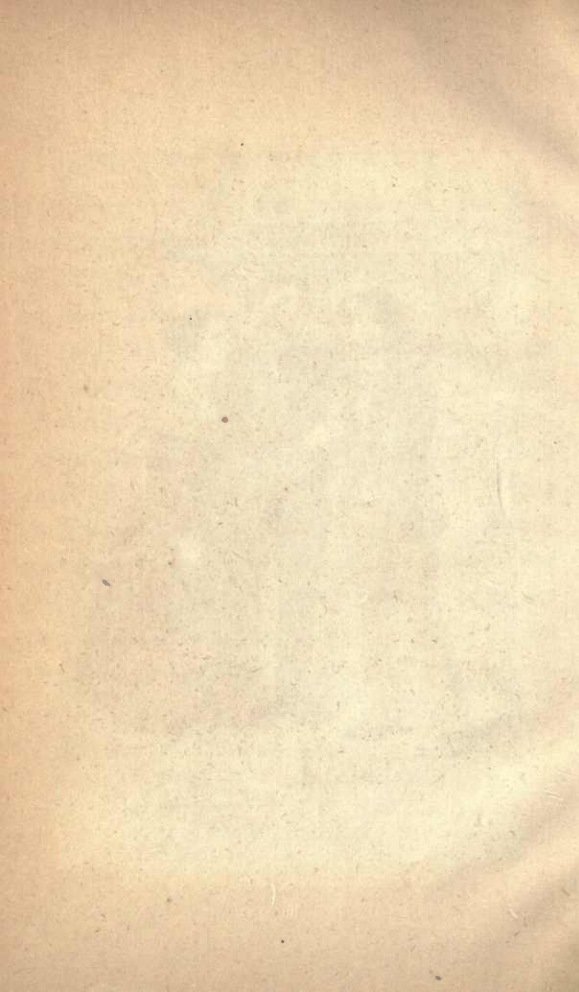
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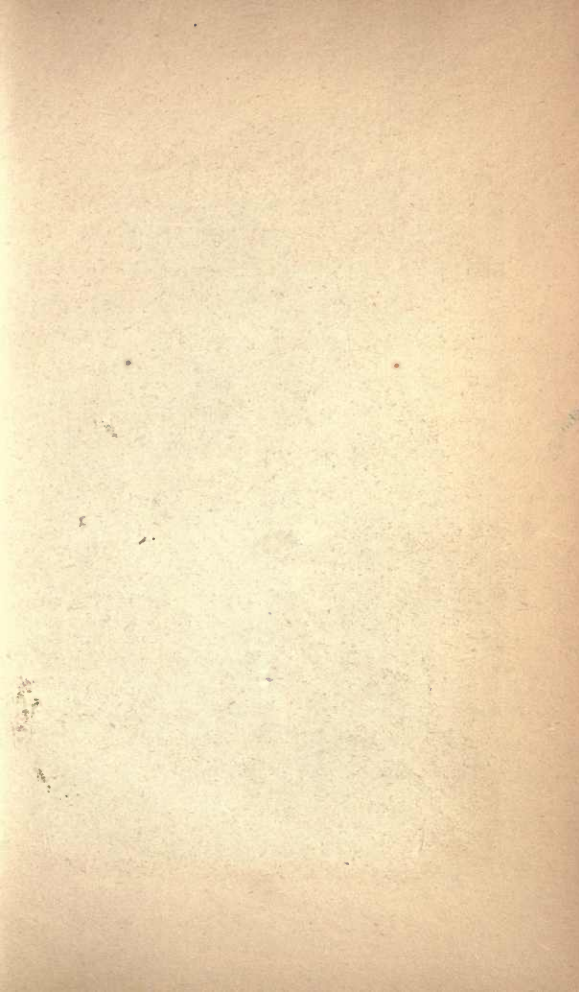
After the passion for gambling had taken possession of Felix, he appeared more active, but only in order to give himself up with less restraint to this vice. In all other respects he remained unchanged; five years residence in Paris had only served, to squander a considerable part of his father's property; he made no effort to obtain the honor of a degree. One day, on entering his room in the greatest despair, having lost his whole property, he found a letter, which informed him, that his father is dangerously ill. He immediately departed for Rouen and only arrived in time to take a sad leave of the old man and to convince himself, that it was he, who, by his wicked life, had shortened the days of his father.

XII.

Two years had not yet passed, since Robert had become the assistant or rather friend of the farmer, when the latter expressed to him his thankfulness and the acknowledgement of his services by giving him the hand of his only daughter. Thus virtuous Robert, the son of a poor gardener, became one of the richest landproprietors. By means of economy he had already ameliorated the condition of his parents and provided for the education of his brothers and sisters; and what pleasure did he feel now, that he could introduce them into a simple but comfortable house, where they could rest from their labours and pass their old age in peace.









XIII.

Felix felt his grief deeply; he had lost his kind father, and was conscious, that he had to a great measure been the cause of his death. He felt, as if he could not leave the place where every thing reminded him of his evil acts. At last he resolved to sell his father's house and then having settled his affairs, he returned to Paris with the firm resolution, to dedicate himself assiduously to his studies. But he deceived himself. First he innocently thought to divert himself by mingling for a short time with his former acquaintances, but he had not enough mastery over himself to resist their allurements, and saw himself soon again the prey of his former passion. After a few months the whole inheritance, which his father had left him was lost at the gambling-table and Felix found himself utterly ruined.

XIV.

Happy in the circle of his family, and thrice happy at the comfort, he had secured to his aged parents, Robert did not forget his benefactors; he pitied the fate of poor Felix, but was far from condemning him entirely. One of his neighbours, whom affairs had called to Paris, told him on his return, that Felix, given up to despair, was obliged to live concealed in a garret. Robert, grieved at this information prevailed upon the vicar to hasten with him to Paris in order to rescue Felix from his miserable condition. They arrived just in time to prevent Felix by kind words of friendship and by the consolations of religion, committing suicide, and by the solicitation of Robert he obtained a situation as clerk in the office of one of Robert's friends. Made wiser by experience, Felix was happy to accept this place and although he might once have aspired to a higher rank in society, he at least retrieved his character by the fulfilment of his duties and thus acquired for himself an honourable existence and the esteem of all virtuous men.



